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Mickey Novak Receives Hitchcock Center's 2014 *Heroes for a Healthy Planet* Award

Amherst, MA –The Hitchcock Center for the Environment was pleased to honor Mickey Novak with the 2014 *Heroes for a Healthy Planet* award at a brunch on Sunday, March 30.

The Hitchcock Center's *Heroes for a Healthy Planet* award acknowledges a person, family, organization or institution in our community that has made a significant contribution toward increased knowledge, understanding, and stewardship of our local economy.

Novak received the award for his decades of tireless dedication to environmental education and conservation of aquatic life, said Julie Johnson, Executive Director of the Hitchcock Center. "As project leader of the Richard Cronin National Salmon Station, Mickey has facilitated engaging and fun educational field experiences with the Hitchcock Center for more than 15 years," she noted. "His hands-on experiential education with thousands of local children has inspired many students to go into the field of environmental conservation. The Hitchcock Center commends him for being an unparalleled resource for the entire Pioneer Valley through his commitment to getting children outside and connecting with the living systems that sustain us all."

Past recipients of the *Heroes for a Healthy Planet* award are:

2007—Birding expert Scott Turner for his lifelong passion for and dedication to the birding world, resulting in a growing body of highly knowledgeable and active citizens who are committed to protecting and preserving important bird habitats throughout New England.

2011—Principal Margaret Riddle and the Faculty of the Robert K. Finn Ryan Road Elementary School for their exceptional passion for and dedication to creating a strong ethic of nature exploration and environmental care in the teachers, students, and parents of their school.

2012—The Camera/McKenna Family for their multi-generational passion for and dedication to protecting the environment through nature exploration, education and civic engagement, making lifelong learning and environmental literacy a core family value.

2013—Former Representative John Oliver (MA-1), Legacy Award, for his leadership as a champion for the protection of our waterways, our land and our air, his dedication to energy conservation and public transportation, and his equally stalwart defense against those who would roll back our existing environmental laws & John Green, Jr., Naturalist, Photographer, and Educator for his significant and lasting contributions to the field of environmental education through natural history interpretation and photography, his deep sense of responsibility to environmental stewardship, and his generous spirit and inclusive approach to teaching and mentoring a wide range students.

About the Hitchcock Center for the Environment

Founded in 1962, the Hitchcock Center for the Environment is an independent nonprofit environmental learning center primarily serving the communities of Western Massachusetts. The Hitchcock Center for the Environment's mission is to foster a greater awareness and understanding of our environment and to develop environmentally literate citizens.

Ethel Dubois (1906-1987), a former guidance counselor who was deeply inspired by the works of Rachel Carson, founded the Hitchcock Center in 1962, initially known as the Long Plain Nature Center and located on a farm in Leverett. In those early days, the organization was supported by a dedicated group of volunteers with the simple goal of providing summer camp and nature programs for low income children living primarily in Holyoke and Springfield. Dubois' passion was to provide children with opportunities otherwise not available to them: to experience the natural world and to develop a sense of wonder about it.

Over the years, the Center changed its name and began offering more programs and services, including new science and nature programs for schools and communities throughout Hampshire, Hampden and Franklin Counties. It moved to its current location at the Larch Hill Conservation Area in 1976, with the generous support of the Town of Amherst.

Today, the Center remains true to its core mission: to foster a greater awareness and understanding of our environment and to develop environmentally literate citizens. The Hitchcock Center for the Environment now serves nearly 8,000 children, youth, and adults each year, employing a growing staff of highly skilled environmental educators. Since 2000 alone, the demand for the Hitchcock Center's programs has more than doubled. For more information on the Center please visit: www.hitchcockcenter.org.